



Lud. Du Guernier inv. et Sculp.



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THE  
*Persian* PRINCESS:  
OR, THE  
ROYAL VILLAIN.  
A  
TRAGEDY.

As it was Acted at the  
THEATRE-ROYAL in Drury-Lane.

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By Mr. THEOBALD.

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— *Tanta est Discordia Fratrum.* Ovid.

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LONDON: Printed for Jonas Brown, at the Black  
Swan without Temple-Bar, 1715.

THE  
NEW PRINCIPLES

OF THE

NEW



OF THE

NEW

AND DON. Printed for J. B. and Co. at the Black  
and White Lion, Temple-Bar, 1715.



To Her GRACE

M A R Y

*Dutchess of ORMOND.*

M A D A M,



Have many times confess'd, in private Conversation, that it was no small Condescension in Your Grace to admit this trifling Essay of a youthful Ge-

A 3

nus

## DEDICATION.

nus to appear in the World under Your Protection: And I desire this publick Address may Witness for Me, that my Sentiments are not yet alter'd.

I am at a stand to determine whether my Presumption was greater in attempting the hardy Task of Tragedy at my Years, or, when attempted, in thinking it worthy of Your Grace's View: But I declare my self free from that proud Thought; Your Grace's Goodness had encourag'd me to make an humble Offering: You did me the Honour of sending for me into Your Presence, on account of a few



## DEDICATION.

few Verses I had wrote on a Subject highly pleasing to Your Grace; which was, on your Noble Lord's Recovery from a dangerous Illness.

I wish I may have a Theme almost as Happy to express my Gratitude and Respect; I mean, that of his Grace's Restoration to Offices of Honour, equal to his high Birth and Virtues. Such great Merit cannot be always mis-understood, however 'tis the Interest of those who envy its Lustre, to strive to keep it clouded and unknown. I almost dare Prophecie this pleasing Revolution; and am sure the Majority  
of



## DEDICATION.

of the Kingdom will shew their Joy on his Return to Power.

But pardon this Digression, *Madam*; and permit me, with the greatest Submission, to confess myself,

*May it please your GRACE,*

*Your GRACE's most Devoted,*

*most Obedient, and*

*most Humble Servant,*

**L. THEOBALD.**



# THE PREFACE.



*I* Thought my self under a Necessity  
of a few Lines by way of Pre-  
face, because it may be wonder'd  
at by some, that I should now  
expose this Piece to the Town,  
which I have suffer'd to lye above six Years in  
a safe Obscurity since its Appearance on the  
Stage: Not that I mean to enter into many  
Apologies for its Defects; for however Par-  
tiality might prevail, I am not totally blind to  
its Errors. I can with much Sincerity accuse  
it in Ovid's Words,

*Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima  
cerno,*

*Me quoque qui feci Judice, digna lini.*

*blush at the Weakness of many Passages, and  
think that a thorough Blot might have done  
them.*

# P R E F A C E.

them most Justice. But now I have made this frank Confession, I am sensible I may be assaulted with these Objections; Why would you then trust it to the Press? or if obstinately determin'd to publish, why not first give it a correcting Hand? To the First, I reply, Repeated Importunities have wrung it from me, and to the latter, I am so deeply engag'd in the Translation of Works of more Moment, that I had no Time to throw away in Amendments.

It was writ, and acted, before I was full Nineteen Years Old; and I expect that Age shall stand as a Plea for many Errors with the candid Reader. It cannot be imagin'd I cou'd then write to establish a Reputation; and if I ever again employ my Pen for the Theatre, I hope this shall stand as a Foil to any such future Production.

I will not give my self the Trouble of its Defence; if my Bookseller find his Accompt, I shall harbour little Pain; only hope, that the Condemnation I in Modesty have given it, shall be deem'd more my Praise, than the Poem's Discredit: and rather invite the Reader to a Perusal, than if I had put on a supercilious Air of Merit, or promis'd Mountains of Art and Ingenuity.

P R O-



# PROLOGUE.

**T**O One and All our Author sends to Day,  
Who with their Presence honour this his Play,  
And says, — but first, he bad me humbly Bow,  
As would-be Members at Elections do,  
Thank for our Vote, and for another sue.  
Too well he knows your Expectations join,  
To look for Sterling in each labour'd Line;  
But he pretends to no such Payment now,  
Whatever he another Year may do;  
And who can tell,  
To what a Pitch he may his Genius raise,  
Wing'd by your Favour, and acquitting Praise?  
Tho' he can boast of nothing here to please,  
Unless your Smiles stamp Worth upon the Piece;  
Nor think to stand the Test, but with a Pit  
Resolv'd to lay aside all carping Wit:  
Thus he declares, and hopes his Suit to win;  
For when pack'd Furies give their Verdict in,  
The Bribe, not Cause, absolves the trembling Sinner:  
So, let your Pity spare our young Beginner.  
'Tis his first Fault, and let him plead his Age  
Tarrest his Doom, and mitigate your Rage;  
Besides our Author, being prostrate here,  
And crying Quarter, should no Danger fear:  
He quits Desert, and on no Treaty stands,  
But throws himself and Scenes into your Hands;  
And if you give them Welcome, he will say,  
Your Mercy, not his Merit sav'd the Play.

Dramatis



# Dramatis Personæ.

## MEN.

|                                                                          |                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>King of Persia.</i>                                                   | <i>Mr. Husbands.</i> |
| <i>Memnon, his Uncle.</i>                                                | <i>Mr. Keen.</i>     |
| <i>Artaban, Prince Royal of Armenia.</i>                                 | <i>Mr. Wilks.</i>    |
| <i>Oxartes, his Friend,</i>                                              | <i>Mr. Mills.</i>    |
| <i>Mirvan, younger Brother of Artaban, but revolted to the Persians.</i> | <i>Mr. Booth.</i>    |
| <i>Barzanes, his Creature.</i>                                           | <i>Mr. Corey.</i>    |
| <i>High-Priest of the Sun.</i>                                           | <i>Mr. Smith.</i>    |
| <i>Cleander.</i>                                                         | <i>Mr. Birkhead.</i> |

## WOMEN.

|                                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Amestris, Sister to the King.</i> | <i>Mrs. Bradshaw.</i> |
| <i>Ardelia, her Confident.</i>       | <i>Mrs. Cox.</i>      |

*Officers, Slaves, Guards, &c.*

THE



THE  
*Persian* PRINCESS;  
OR, THE  
ROYAL VILLAIN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *Antichamber in the Palace.*

*Enter Memnon, Mirvan, and High-Priest of the Sun.*

MEMNON.

**B**

Y Heav'n! it fires my frozen Blood  
with Rage,

And makes it scald this aged Trunk, to  
think

Our *Persia*, that for Discipline and  
Rule

Stood Candidate with *Sparta*, rough in War,

Patient of Labour, and disdaining Ease,

B

Should

2 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

Should now, debas'd into licentious Riots,  
Make Appetite her God: — and scorn to bow  
Before the Rising Sun, whilst Midnight Lamps  
Attend her Sports beyond the setting Stars.

*Mirv.* Auspicious Vice, that lords it o'er the World,  
Still grows in Strength; and Virtue keeps aloof:  
Like sculking *Scythians*, shifts her wand'ring Tents,  
Nor dares to fix a Court throughout the Earth;  
A Stranger, and an Exile ev'ry where! —  
But yet, how'er Licentiousness prevails,  
Let not your strict Austerity of Soul,  
With an accusing Frown, reproach the Joys  
Which rise in ev'ry Breast from *Persia's* Triumphs:  
Think on the glorious Havock of the Day;  
And let the gaudy Scene inspire your Virtue  
To welcome Conquest. —

*Memo.* Rather, let me think  
On all the Dangers we have undergone,  
And bless those Pow'rs, by whom we were preserv'd!  
Those Pow'rs, that chang'd the Issue of the Day:  
Making our Foes Confederates in their Ruin.  
While our young King, the Life of all our Hopes,  
Spurr'd on his Courser in the Lists of Death,  
Where the Fight hottest rag'd, He was unhors'd;  
When at that Instant a brave unknown Foe  
Broke thro' the Press, and with his gen'rous Arm  
Prevented th' horrid Stroke, prepar'd to fall  
Upon the Head of Majesty oppress'd! —

*Mirv.* It was an Act of Wonder, and of Praise:  
And tho', when'er *Armenia* comes across my Thoughts,

## The Royal Villain.

3

A Curse attends it; May your hostile Swords  
Pierce thro' its utmost Limits, lay it waste,  
Raze all its Palaces, consume its Stores,  
And bring the Plough upon its fenced Cities!  
Yet I could smother all my Wrongs; forgive  
This hated Country for so brave an Action.  
I long, yet dread to know the happy Man  
That did, what Pride and Envy with undone! [*Aside,*

*H. Priest.* Had *Mars* appointed you for his Relief,  
You might have doubly claim'd our Princess' Love;  
For her own Freedom, and her Brother's Life:  
Attractive Charms to break her Virgin Coyness,  
And give her up to crown your high Desert.

*Mirv.* Sooth not my Madness with the fond Conceit  
Of Virgin Coyness; — By the Sun's bright Beams  
I swear, 'tis insolent Perverseness in her;  
The saucy Pride of Woman's Affectation  
To return Scorn for Courtship! — When our Arms  
Had made her aged Father and her self  
Pris'ners to our *Armenian* State, I thought  
A Victor's Pow'r might awe her to Compliance;  
Yet then she haughtily disdain'd my Suite,  
And to my Face avow'd, — (O Plague to think,  
And Hell to utter!) — my Brother had her Heart.

*H. Priest.* Women are blind to Merit; obstinate  
In Choice; and led at random by their Wills;  
Still fond of Contradiction! —

*Mirv.* — No, my Priest;  
For tho' they search not Virtues in the Soul;  
Yet they are caught with Glory's dazzling Bait.



## 4 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

My Rival had the Rights of Eldership;  
Immediate Heir to wide *Armenia's* Empire;  
Him, Him she saw the curst obsequious Croud  
(Neglectful of my Father's Years,) adore:  
And bask their Vileness in his rising Beams.  
Tho' I confess, in spite of stubborn Hate,  
And, as his Foe, I grudge the Praise I give him;  
Yet Nature form'd him worthy of a Throne:  
With Courage, Justice, Eloquence, Compassion,  
And all the Virtues which indulgent Heav'n  
Could grant a Prince to bless his People's Hopes.

*Menn.* How relish'd our Old King your sev'ral Suites?  
Pris'ns, and the keen Resentments for his Loss  
Of Liberty and Empire, made him sure  
Look on you both with Eyes of Enmity,  
And heighten'd Scorn——

*Mirr.* — Quite contrary, my Lord;  
He was not heard to breathe one murmur'ing Accent  
During his Chains; but calm, as if his Hate  
Were sunk in an Extream of Piety,  
And Shackles were the easie Bands of Friendship.  
By Fate, or Chance, he favour'd my Pretensions;  
And urg'd, in vain, his Daughter to obey him.  
This partial Choice soon got a Tongue at Court,  
And *Artaban's* Disgrace was loudly talk'd of;  
Our Father, jealous of his Darling's Honour,  
Took on himself the Vengeance of his Son;  
And, 'spite of constant Intercessions made,  
Pronounc'd the Good, the Royal Captive's Doom.

*Menn.*

## The Royal Villain.

*Memo.* O mighty Brother!----Most unhappy Prince!  
How did our *Persia* stagger in thy Death?

*Miru.* That Scene of Blood for ever banish'd me  
Th' *Armenian* Court: I fled the barb'rous Soil;  
And tho' intreated, nay commanded back,  
I still remain'd an Exile; 'till at last  
Proclaim'd a publick Traytor to the State,  
And, stung with that Indignity, I left  
My Country's conqu'ring Arms to succour *Persia*.

*Enter Barzanes.*

I left my Mistress too;---The cruel Fair one,  
To her admir'd, successful *Artaban*.

*Barz.* With Him be all your Pangs of Rival Love  
Forgot; Report, that fain would be believ'd,  
Agrees, this mournful Day's declining Sun  
Saw *Artaban's* Eclipse.

*Miru.* ---Triumph my Heart,  
And all my Spirits dance to that glad Sound!  
While my pleas'd Senses whisper to my Soul,  
Thy Rival, hated *Artaban's* no more!---  
Oh, 'tis a Theme to satisfy Revenge,  
And injur'd Love atone: But say, my Friend,  
My best *Barzanes*, teach me how he fell.

*Barz.* When he perceiv'd his last Reserve of Men  
Too few to conquer, He, intent on Death,  
Survey'd a while, where noblest he might fall.  
Then, furious, rush'd amidst his yielding Foes;  
And, as he were the Minister of Fate,  
Where-e'er he turn'd, Destruction mark'd his Way:  
'Till---

## 6 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*Mirv.* -----Death!----Be silent, Slave; I bad you not  
Descant upon his Fate; but, by the Pride  
That swells my Breast, I would have giv'n this Hand  
To've heard, he had a flying Stab of Shame  
Upon his Back; and bit the Ground in Anguish! ---

*H. Priest.* Cease, mighty Sir; your Anger grows too loud;  
The Trumpet's Sound proclaims the Triumph near,  
And see, the King;-----

*Enter King, attended with Commanders, who range them-  
selves on each Side of the Stage; bowing low, as the King  
speaks.*

*King.* At length, my Friends, the dire Decision's o'er;  
Discord and War, by our victorious Fury  
Whip'd back, are slunk into their native Hell;  
Turn all our Battle-Axes, Swords, and Spears,  
To Scythes and Plough-Shares; or let's hang 'em up,  
As useless Trophies, to our Household Gods;  
The rusty Prey of long corroding Peace.

*Memn.* Accept the Tribute of your humble Slave,  
That kneels with Joy to kiss your sacred Robe;  
And counts the greatest Blessing of his Years,  
At once, to see your Safety and Success.

*King.* Rise, my good Uncle; Welcome to this Breast;  
Be always present here, with sober Counsels  
Restrain the Rashness of your head-strong King,  
And guide his Youth with Reason----Pardon, Prince,

[*To Mirvan:*

That you thus long have unregarded stood,  
The Source of all our Joy: To you we owe  
Those Heaps of Slain, that, cov'ring o'er the Field,



*The Royal Villain.*

73

Must gorge our Kites and Vultures! Common Fame  
Speaks such Heroick Executions of you,  
As even strike our Admiration dumb.

*Mirv.* My Lord, I court not popular Applause;  
But scorn the Praise, when from so base a Tongue;  
The many-headed Monster weighs not Merit;  
But deals the shuffled Prize, with rash Design,  
As publick Hate or private Int'rest sways 'em.  
I fought not on the common servile Score  
To conquer Kingdoms, or erect new Thrones;  
A more sublime Ambition fir'd my Soul,  
Love wing'd my Arm, and got the start of Fortune!—

*King.* By my bright Race of Royal Ancestors,  
Love has a Champion worthy of its Cause;  
And who deserves to reap its best Rewards.  
To such high Worth all Recompence is vile,  
Or all but Her, for whom you fought and conquer'd.

*Mirv.* What Lustre or what Pride can Conquest boast,  
When she, in whom all Triumph is compriz'd,  
Absconds; and grudges her indulgent Beams  
On publick Pomp!—An empty Pageantry,  
Thus unadorn'd with her illustrious Presence!

*King.* This Night she has obtain'd, in close Recess,  
Conversing with the Gods—  
Some idle Zeal of short continuance,  
Or hasty Vow, yet unfulfill'd, that hangs  
Upon her Woman's Conscience: In the Morn  
This holy Man shall preach her into Love,  
And give her up, resign'd to your Embraces.



## 3     *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*H. Priest.* Most glorious Sir, th' Infernal Pow'rs exact  
The Tribute you by solemn Oath declar'd  
To pay their Deities, the War once done;  
A Hecatomb of Slaves.

*King.* Be all those Wretches, (whom th' Event of War  
Has doom'd a Sacrifice, t' appease the Ghost  
Of my Great murder'd Father;) brought before us:  
That if Lord *Mirvan* have a Friend amongst 'em,  
He may escape the Rigour of his Fate;  
The rest conduct to th' Altar——

[*A Train of Prisoners in Chains guarded, are drawn in  
Files across the Stage; Artaban last.*]

*Mirv.* Death to my Hopes!—By all my Hate, 'tis he;  
Perdition seize him! Whirlwinds snatch him hence,  
And rid me of that Face, which gives me Tortures!

[*King to Memn.*] Who's he, whose dazzling Garb and  
august Port

Attract all Eyes? on whom the croud of Slaves  
Gaze with Concern, nor heed their own Distress?  
I would be taught his Name, and Quality——

*Mirv.* Like a Mute Victim must he bleed, unknown?  
Where then is my Revenge?—Or, if I should  
Disclose him to the King, who knows th' Event?  
But Royal Pity, and his Sister's Pray'rs,  
May bribe some gen'rous Start of fickle Temper  
To pardon; and so disappoint my Hate!——

[*Artaban advancing from among the Prisoners.*]

*Art.* How long must we retain this servile Being,  
To wait the Victor's Sentence? We are arm'd  
Against the worst of Fate, and scorn alike

**Your**

# The Royal Villain. 9

Your Mercy, or your Malice. Death's the Prize  
We wish to draw, now Liberty is gone!  
These Chains revenge you of the Man, has made  
Your Soldiers tremble and your Subjects fly;  
Behold the Scourge of Persia, *Ariaban*——

*Mirv.* Proud forging Slave, thou ly'st; for *Ariaban*  
Was seen to fall; and thou, to die more nobly,  
Would'st imp his Shape, and arrogate his Fame.

*Art.* Too well thou know'st this Face, dissembling

*Mirvan*;

Thou Traytor to thy Father, Gods, and Country!  
I envy not the short-liv'd Pomp you've gain'd,  
The Hire of Treason and the Troops you sold.  
Better be thus——in Honour's vanquish'd Cause,

Than that inglorious Pageantry of Falshood!  
Thou wert my Brother, and I will not curse thee,  
But my superior Virtue spurns thee off;  
The Stain and Dregs of Royalty prophan'd!

*Mirv.* The Losers have a Priviledge to rail,  
But I'm to learn this Woman's wrangling War;  
Which, wert thou Free and durst assert in Arms,  
My Sword should answer thee——

*Art.* ——Take back that Falshood;  
Were I in Arms, thou would'st as soon contend  
With angry *Jove*; or stand the falling Shock  
Of riving Thunderbolts, as meet my Rage.  
I hunted thee, thro' all th' embattled Plain;  
Shook off the Crouds, that press'd to meet their Fate;  
Beneath this Arm, and only wish'd for thee:  
That Fortune would have set us, Face to Face,

16 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

Where I might fairly 've charg'd thee with thy Crimes;  
Thy Father's, and thy Country's Trust betray'd;  
And sunk thee with thy Shame——But still thy Fear  
Out-ran my lame Revenge in the Pursuit!

*King.* 'Tis Insolence in Captives thus to talk——

*Memn.* Yet you, that boast such fierce Demeanour now,  
Are conscious of one Act, viler than Fear;  
(For he that suffers Crimes, is guilty of 'em;)  
I mean, the captive King of *Persia's* Death;  
Against the Law of Arms and Nations murder'd:  
Murder'd for you!——Now let your Conscience answer,  
What Martial Worth, what Trophies can efface  
So rank a Stain to Honour?

*Art.* ——Hear me, Statesman;

If thou, unknowing, lay'st it to my Charge,  
That I consented to that Monarch's Fate;  
Thou hast a Soul black as that Deed of Rashness:  
Black as those Arts devising Politicians  
Use, to subvert the Innocence, they want!  
I hope not to be spar'd for this Confession,  
No threats of Death, or Tortures, could have forc'd;  
But, as a Soldier, I would clear my Fame:  
And, like the Sun, set in an Orb of Glory.

*King.* Enjoy the fancy'd Glories of your Fate;  
Guards, drag him to his Doom——

*Art.* ——Ay, glut your Hate;

Let my Blood stream to quench your thirsty Souls  
Till every Vein be empty.  
But know, insulting Prince! whom this Day's Chance  
Has made th' Ascendant of my trampled Fortune;



# The Royal Villain. 11

Had not this abject Slave, you now condemn,  
Say'd you from Death, and blunted Slaughter's Edge,  
You had not liv'd to know your Arms have conquer'd!

[Going with the Guards]

King. Soldiers, come back, — By Heav'n, I am o'er-  
whelm'd

With Shame, and Wonder! — Let me view that Face,  
Whose Features now confirm my doubting I thoughts,  
And shew me my Preserver: O forgive,  
Thou gen'rous Man, the Rashness of my Rage;  
And to my Ignorance impute your Sentence:  
Behold, with open Arms I meet your Virtues;  
And, for a Life restor'd, embrace your Friendship.

Mirv. Death to my Hopes! —

Art. — Yet hold, mistaken Prince;  
For I must speak what Honour bids me say:  
Think not, that *Artaban's* own rugged Breast  
Counsel'd his Arm t' arrest th' impending Stroke;  
And save his *Persian* Foe to make a Friend of  
No; — but the Princess, e're the Fight began,  
Adjur'd me, by the tender Love I bore her,  
By all my Hopes of Victory and Her,  
To save her Brother, and decline his Sword.

Oh! my *Amestris*, —  
What a Reward has partial Fortune giv'n  
For my Obedience, and unconquer'd Faith?

Mirv. Demand your promis'd Victims, holy Sir.

H Priest. My Lord, 'tis in the Gods behalf I speak;  
For our Nocturnal Altars all are rais'd;  
For the Performance of your vow'd Revenge.

King.



## 12 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*King.* Peace, greedy Priest,--and tell your churlish Gods,  
No sanguine Steam shall feed their famish'd Nostrils  
Till *Persia's* Monarch pleases.--- All the Court  
This Night shall shine with gay luxurious Pleasure;  
Nor Blood prophane the sacred Festival.  
Back to their Prisons with the Crew of Slaves;  
But for Prince *Artaban*, take off his Chains;  
And let a Guard at distance wait his Pleasure;  
Tho' sternly he declines our proffer'd Love,  
The Princess till to Morrow shall relieve him  
To grace her Nuptials.--- Forward, to the Temple.

[*Exeunt omnes, præter Mirv. Artab. and Guards.*]

*Art.* Ha! Grace her Nuptials? O my tortur'd Soul!  
Stay, cruel Prince, and take your Gift again.  
For Life will be my Curse:---I dare not live.---  
Let me be rack'd, impal'd, or have my Flesh  
Torn from the starting Bones, I'll suffer all,  
Nor groan beneath my Doom.---But he is gone;---  
And I afflict my self with idle Rage,  
That spends it self on Air: as angry Waves  
Swell up at Rocks, and dash themselves to pieces.

*Mirv.* Brother;---

*Art.* ---Away---

*Mirv.* ---But hear: The rising Morn  
Reigns the Princess to my longing Arms;  
Then, if a Smile from her will ease your Pains,  
She shall have leave to shew you Grace. --- Farewel.

[*Exit Mirvan.*]

*Art.* Brav'd by this Stripling!--who, not two Years since,  
Ere this reverse of Fate, would fawn and cringe;

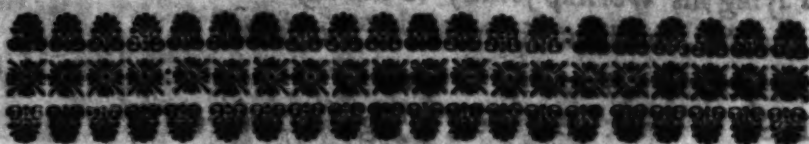
## The Royal Villain.

Paying his Worship jointly to the Sun  
And Me, without distinction of Respect.  
So specious a Sincerity, as made  
It Sin to doubt! But thou, my good *Oxaries*,  
(Whom this Day's Fray has sever'd from thy Friend;) *O*  
Didst point his Falshood out thro' its Disguise.  
But thou art lost!—And my *Amestris* too! *A*  
My Princess:—O Destruction, Death and Horror!  
Torn from my Arms yet in our Bridal State: *Q*  
Why was I born, ye Gods, with such a Fate?  
So over-charg'd with mighty Bliss at first,  
Then in a total Deprivation curst! *E* *[Exit guarded]*

## The End of the First Act.

**A C T**

14 *The Persian Princess; Or,*



A C T II S C E N E I.

S C E N E *a Gallery in the Castle.*

*Enter High Priest, follow'd by Mirvan.* [Thunder.]

*Mirv.* I tell you, Priest, you must, and ought, resent it;  
The Sacrilege is plain; your Gods are robb'd:  
And angry Heav'n, in Prodigies, declares  
It self impatient of unfinish'd Vows.

Else, why this dreadful, and unnatural Wreck  
Of the vex'd Elements to fright Mankind?  
The Thunder rous not with its wonted Terrors,  
But seems to burst yon Azure Roof asunder;  
And rends our Earth with its Convulsive Ecchoes,  
As if the Gyants were again at War;  
Or Jove had Sworn to cancel erring Nature  
For being Disobedient. Horror reigns,  
Joyn'd with Confusion, like the Dawn of Chaos!

*H. Priest.* The People swarm, like Troops of Summer  
Bees,  
Arm'd with Domestick Weapons; full of Outrage,  
And wild Tumultuous Murmurs;—To the King—  
Is all the Outcry of the Factionous Herd;  
Force him to yield us those Devoted Slaves.

For



*The Royal Villain.* ACT 15

For instant Sacrifice, and to appease  
The wrathful Pow'rs.

*Mirv.* If *Mirvan's* humble Judgment may be heard,  
The King assumes too far; looks on made Vows,  
As Words of haste; as he were Arbitrator;  
And could from Destiny, at Will, resume 'em.  
What can we better hope, but this Contempt  
Of *Mithra's* Godhead in his Injur'd Priest,  
Will soon unmask Religion to the Vulgar,  
And make it despicable? Sacrifice  
Will be no more, the Altar's Flames extinguish'd,  
And Temples Solitary!

*H. Priest.* By the bright God, the Patron of our Empire,  
Your words have pierc'd my Soul with that unerring  
Semblance of Reason, I already feel  
What we most fear—The Sanctitude of Faith  
Debas'd, and all its Venerable Honours  
Familiar to the Croud! O mighty Pow'rs,  
Assert your sinking Worship, and avenge  
Your own Preheminence disown'd, insulted!

*Mirv.* Back to the Temple, and intreat the King  
The Slaves may dye to satisfy the People,  
I must attend awhile to see the Princess;  
That Visit o'er, I will my self return,  
And second your Request:—Make not delays.—

[*Exit H. Priest.*]

I know, the King is obstinately bent,  
And will refuse him;—Well, as I could wish;—  
The Priest, that smothers his Resentments now,  
Again deny'd, no doubt will vent 'em to me:  
And while his Rage is up, I cannot want



## 16 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

An Instrument to work with: But with Zeal  
Will varnish o'er Ambition, and escape  
The Odium that attends on open Mischief.  
But see, she comes; Grief on her lovely Aspect  
Hangs, like a Cloud upon the Morning's Brow;  
And shines with Lustre borrow'd from her Beauties.  
I will retire; perhaps may learn the Cause.

[*Miry. retires.*]

*Enter Amestris and Ardelia.*

*Amest.* Why dost thou love infectious Misery,  
And hug the Ruins of thy mournful Mistress?  
Go, my *Ardelia*, to some sprightly Court;  
Enjoy the Charms with which Heav'n crowns your Youth;  
And waste not Beauty in destructive Anguish.  
Thou hast no Cause for Sorrow; — I must mourn;  
Each future Day must witness to my Tears,  
And silent Night start at my waking Groans.  
For ne'er will Slumbers close these streaming Eyes,  
Till Death, in pity, seal 'em up for ever! —

*Ard.* Have Comfort, Madam.

*Amest.* — Can'st thou be so cruel  
To mock my Tears, and make my Grief thy Sport?  
What Comfort can I have, who have no Hope?  
But, like some shipwreck'd Wretch, encompass'd round  
With threat'ning Seas, stand shiv'ring on the Ridge  
Of a bleak Rock, that peeps above the Flood;  
And look, and wish in vain to be reliev'd:  
But can behold no Rescue from my Fears.  
While the curl'd Billows foam with horrid Discord,  
Mount with hoarse Rage, and climb against the Rock;

As each tumultuous Wave were at a Strife  
To dash me off, and plunge me in the Deep.

*Ard.* Cease to indulge this Canker to your Ease,  
And, striving, overcome it: Care and Sorrow  
Give Ground apace at sight of Pomp and Pleasure;  
But, fed with Solitary Resignation,  
Get to fantastick Heights: and dress'd in Horrors,  
In seeming Horrors, turn the Soul to Madness.

*Amest.* O! for a Cure like that of all my Pains;  
Madness were decent Pomp my Birth might claim,  
To mark my Sorrows from ignobler Grief,  
But stubborn Reason will not be depos'd;  
Like Conscience, setting all my Plagues to view:  
Yet, oh! *Ardelia*, if thou would'st be kind,  
Go to the Prison Grates; and from the Slaves  
Learn, if it may be, by whose cursed Hand  
Prince *Artaban* was slain, and how he fell.

*Ard.* I will inform my self with utmost Care,  
And hasten to attend you. [Exit *Ardelia*.]

*Amest.* — What a weight  
Of unacquainted Sorrow loads my Breast!  
Captivity was kind; and gave me Joy,  
Then when it wounded deepest; Liberty,  
Dire Change of State! has robb'd me of all Comfort.

[*Mirvan comes forward.*]

*Mirv.* In Tears! Ye Gods, what ill presumptuous Cause  
Makes Sorrow thus intrude on Princely Beauty?  
Waste not, bright Excellence, those precious Drops;  
More worth, than the Distilling fragrant Gums  
That make our *India* rich! — When Princes weep

18 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

The Heav'ns are shook as when the Thund'rer nods;  
And tott'ring Earth seems sliding off its Props.  
Each Element, in fatal League combin'd,  
Put Nature to th' Expence of Prodigies;  
And all comply with you to be disorder'd.

*Amest.* This Flattery, my Lord, as ill becomes you  
As your Intrusion on my private Hours;  
If your Deserts have bought my Brother's Favour,  
Is my Disquiet to repay your Service?

*Mirv.* Do I offend, thus kneeling at your Feet?  
Is it Intrusion thus to breathe my Vows,  
Or Insolence to say, how well I love?

*Amest.* What! Love from thee? O do not name it,  
*Mirvan;*

Revenge, Ambition, Treason, Death, and Slaughter,  
Would better grace thy Speech;— There was a Man,  
(Heav'n pardon, that I live to say, there was!)  
Braver in War, than Stories best of Heroes:  
True to his Friend, his Country, and his Gods;  
In Mercy gentle as the falling Snow  
That wets unfelt; most strict in Honour's Laws;  
But when he lov'd, — Ye Gods, how he ador'd!  
And as the Penitent with awful Fear  
Bows at the Shrine, and sighs, and melts in Tears;  
So *Artaban* —

*Mirv.* — Damnation seize the Fiend!  
And when he dies, —

*Amest.* — Thou know'st that he is Dead:  
Curst be the Tongue, that triumphs o'er his Fate;  
But doubly curst the Cause that sever'd him

And



*The Royal Villain.*

19

And me! — Thou mighty Goddess, that presid'st  
O'er Nuptial Vows, stoop from thy Seat of Bliss;  
And in th' Unalterable Scroll of Fate,  
Let this my Wish be registred against me.  
Show'r all thy fiercest Indignation down  
On this devoted Head; devouring Earth  
Gape and intomb me quick, if I consent  
On any Terms to yield this Wedded Hand  
To any second Lord.

*Miro.* — Ha! Wedded! — When?  
How, and to whom! —

*Amest.* — To Godlike *Artaban*.

*Miro.* Furies! — In time recant,  
And to the list'ning Winds pronounce it false,  
Or by this Hand, th' unerring Instrument  
Of my Revenge, he dies —

*Amest.* — Sooth not my Breast  
With a false Joy; O could'st thou vouch it true,  
That *Artaban's* alive; I would adore  
Thy Virtue; think thee Fair, as new-born Light;  
Stile thy Ambition an aspiring Heat  
Of Matter in thy Soul allied to Heav'n;  
Bleach all thy Crimes, and think 'em Virtues all.  
But tell me, does he live? Is't possible?  
Yet do not, for my boding Heart has answer'd,  
And says, it cannot be: — Th' unhallow'd Furies  
Borrow'd the Loom of Fate, and fond of Slaughter,  
With heedless Havock have undone the World.  
Had I toe dy'd, then I had been most happy;  
'Tis Liberty to dye, when Life's uneasy;

'Tis



20 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

'Tis a Retreat from Pain, and those dire Thoughts  
That drag the working Soul thro' Realms of Torture.

*Mirv.* Why weeps my Fair? Be kind, and cease your Tears:

*Enter Artaban behind.*

O let that Sigh dispel the sullen Storm;  
Chase each rude Care, and bring you back to Gladness.

*Artab.* See, see, ye Gods, how frail are Women's Hearts!  
The Sex is all Delusion:—

*Mirv.* ----Do not strive

To pluck away your Hand; it must, it shall  
Be mine; and I to Death will prize the Treasure. [*Thunder.*

*Amest.* Hark! let me go; Barbarian, let me go;  
And talk no more of Love; lest Earth should gape;

And, thinking I consented to the Theme,  
Th' assisting Thunder call to plunge me deep

Grov'ling and guilty to th' Infernal Shades:

No more to view my Lord, my *Artaban*.---

[*He comes forward.*

Shield me, ye Pow'rs, and guard my frightened Soul;

What art thou, that assum'st that pleasing Form,

And, stealing on the Night, invad'st my Eyes.

With Sights too exquisite for humane Sense:

My Brain grows sick, and Objects dance before me.

[*Swoons, he catches her.*

*Artab.* Ha! Heav'n, she falls!—

*Mirv.* ----Confusion! Where's the Guard?

How got he Entrance here? Deceitful Traitors!

*Artab.* O! Lift again those Lids, that rob the World

Of its best Light thus clos'd in seeming Death:

The frightened Roses from your Cheeks are fled,

That seated there, and intermix'd with Lillies,

Are

## *The Royal Villain.*

21

Are wont t' illuminate the lovely Plain  
With Tinctures, bright as those of rising Morn!  
Still art thou cold? I'll force thy fleeting Soul  
Back to its Seat, and warm thee to new Life.

She comes,---and Beauty reassumes its Throne,  
The sprightly Charms mount up into her Face;  
And play, like *Cupids*, round their Mother Goddess.

*Amest.* Am I awake? or only dream of Joys?  
Do I indeed possess thee once again?

Oh! we must never be divided more?

*Mirv.* Tortures, and Hell! I will not bear all this;  
The King's betray'd; his treach'rous Guards are brib'd;  
But I shall stop the Growth of further Treasons.

[*Draws his Sword.*

Unhand me, Madam;---

*Amest.* ---Not while these weak Hands  
Have pow'r to hold; these Eyes and Tongue to beg;  
But I will clasp your Knees, and draw you back,  
Till you on Me have turn'd your Anger first;  
On Me, the Cause of this your Enmity.

*Mirv.* Then thus, I'll force my way; and end at once  
The great Dispute:---This, to thy Heart.

[*Pushes at Artab. he draws a Dagger from his Bosom, and  
in a short Dispute wounds Mirv. in the Hand: his  
Sword drops.*

*Amest.* O, for some help:---

*Artab.* ---Come on;---I am prepar'd,  
And thus return th' Assault.

*Mirv.* ---Curst Accident!  
Perdition rot this weak unfinew'd Arm.

But

## 22 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

But rest assur'd, there soon will come a time,  
Shall finish this imperfect Quarrel.—— [Exit Mirv.

*Amest.* Are you not hurt, my Lord? Alas! you bleed.

*Art.* 'Tis but a Scratch; the Villain meant it home;  
And put his utmost Strength upon the Thrust:  
But in this Cause, for my *Amestris* fought,  
(O think me not a vain and idle Boaster;) Had *Hercules* himself attack'd my Life;  
I could with Ease have warded all his Strokes,  
As I did *Mirvan's*.——See, to whom we stand  
Indebted, that we once again have met.

*Re-enters Ardelia.*

*Amest.* *Ardelia's* ever kind; and, if I live,  
Such Recompence as poor *Amestris* can  
Bestow, she may command.

*Art.* —— You over-rate  
My little Services, and make me blush;  
Whate'er I can, my Duty will injoin.  
And pardon, Sir, your Servant's tender Fears;  
In my Return, (what Terror seiz'd my Heart!)  
I met Lord *Mirvan*, fierce and fiery red,  
Who passing cry'd aloud, Double the Guards,——  
Treason will spread apace, unless surpris'd,  
The King's not safe while *Artaban's* alive.——

*Amest.* Save me, my Lord, and hide me from my Fears;  
A thousand Fancies croud into my Breast,  
Most hideous all, all ominous to thee!  
*Mirvan* has Pow'r; commands my Brother's Ear,  
And bends his Will; we must expect a Storm,  
When so much Malice, like a thick'ning Cloud,

Threatens



## *The Royal Villain.*

23

Threatens to pour a Deluge on our Heads.

*Art.* Dangers are only so, to guilty Fear:  
But Fate, or Fortune cannot work to move  
Th' undaunted Soul, with Innocence secur'd!

*Amest.* O fly, my Lord, yet while 'tis in your Pow'r;  
Security betrays us to the Snare,  
And, like a Thief, first trains us from the Road,  
Then spoils us of our Wealth. O think, my Lord,  
How the strong Leopard shoots at once with Rage,  
And seizes its unwary simple Prey.  
So easie does Oppression gain its Ends  
On open and unguarded Innocence.

*Art.* O drive me not to Shame with strong Perswasion;  
For Resolution melts in Beauty's Fires:  
You drive my Reason from its strongest Holds,  
And make it fly before insulting Love,  
The busie Sp'rits that cluster round my Heart,  
To Reason's Laws their Fealty disavow;  
And all submit themselves to Love and you. [Exeunt.



SCENE changes to the Temple of the Sun.

*The King seated under a Canopy. Memnon, High Priest,  
and Officers.*

*Memn.* Urge it no more; you see the King's disturb'd;  
Please, holy Sir, to give his Passion way.

*King.* Talk not to Me of Prodigies and Omens;  
By the bright Chariot of yon Sun we worship,

Tho'

24 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

The' the fierce Bolts should crush this pond'rous Roof  
Upon my Head, I would in Death persist;  
And tell the Gods, the Victims shall not die:—  
I'm not to learn the Artifice of Priest-hood;  
That Heav'n's a Plea; and when you want the Spoils  
Of offer'd Slaves, and find your Gains with-held,  
Then Heav'n's incens'd at Sacrifice delay'd.

*H. Priest.* Yet, Sir;—

*King.* —No more.

*H. Priest.* —Your Pardon; I must speak:—  
This will not quell the Croud.

*King.* —Ha! what? the Croud!  
Perdition seize those Engines of thy Will,  
Who gaze with Admiration of thy Virtue,  
And specious Piety; and thus amus'd,  
See not the muffled Vices of thy Soul,  
I will go face these busie bluff'ring Slaves;  
And let 'em know that I am King in *Persia*;  
And not a Priest, the Idol of their Worship!  
Follow me, Sirs. [Exeunt King, Memn. and Officers.

*Manes High Priest solus.*

*H. Priest.* Great *Mithra*! If thou be'st a God of Pow'r,  
If those magnifick Attributes we give thee,  
Are not intirely Titular and Vain,  
Let not thy violated Servant kneel,  
And beg Revenge unheard:—

*Enter Mirvan.*

*Mirv.* —'Tis as I guess'd. [Aside,  
Who nam'd Revenge?—Up, venerable Sir,  
Trust not the Gods; Revenge must be our own;

And

*The Royal Villain.* 35

And when they have inspir'd a gen'rous Rage  
Into our Breasts, they Will that we should act  
As Passion dictates.

*H. Priest.* — See, my Lord, alas!  
You bleed. What hardy Villain durst attempt  
Your Princely Person?

*Mirv.* — How the Coward shakes!  
What can we less expect than Wounds and Insults,  
When Slaves are licens'd to commit all Outrage,  
And spurn at their Superiors? —

*H. Priest.* — How, my Lord?  
The Slaves are all secur'd, if Chains and Dungeons  
Can keep 'em fast.

*Mirv.* — I grant you, Sir, they are  
In gross; but *Artaban*, the Master-Slave;  
Walks unconfin'd, unshackled, should I say  
Unarm'd, this Blood would witness to the Falseness.

*H. Priest.* O! why was I bred up to musty Books,  
From early Childhood, to digest the Rules  
Which contradict my Sense. When I am wrong'd,  
In vain's the Cure of Patience, preach'd Indurance,  
And dull Content: Resentment fires my Soul;  
And I could wish I knew to wield a Sword,  
To purchase Vengeance for my Friend and self. —

*Mirv.* Peace, Sir; and let us whisper our Consults,  
In Place of more assured Secrecy;  
Nor talk of Swords; for Violence is vain:  
An open Vengeance loses all its Merit:  
And, like a Mole, industrious to be seen,



## 26 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

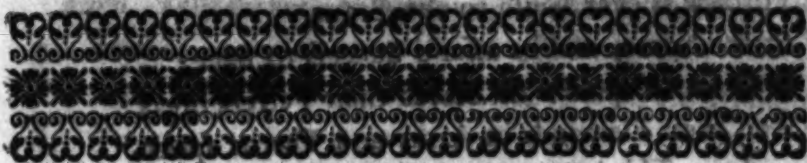
Works up its Folly outward to the World,  
Force too's Obnoxious to unsteady Fortunes;  
But close Designs unguarded leave the Foe,  
If there we fail, th' opprobrious Overthrow  
To awkward and imperfect Arts we owe.

[Exeunt.]

### *The End of the Second Act.*



ACT



ACT III. SCENE I.

A Night SCENE of a thick Grove.

*Enter Oxartes in a Priest's Habit.*

**I**F Error cheat me not in these blind Tracts,  
 'Tis here Lord *Mirvan*, by confirm'd Report,  
 Soon as the Night-Bell tolls the Hour of Twelve,  
 Passes alone, repairing to the *Magi*:  
 Black Fiends, that people this Infernal Grove;  
 And by dire Contract with the *Stygian* Gods,  
 From stalking Ghosts extort th' uncertain Knowledge  
 Of hid Futurity:—This Gown and Beard  
 Make a Disguise too nice for Night and *Mirvan*  
 To see me thro', unless my Speech betray me:  
 Which if it do, this Dagger knows his Part:  
 The Clock has struck; and yonder is a Light;  
 Now Fortune, be my Guide, 'tis thee I follow.

*[Enters the Grove.]*

*Enter Mirvan from the Grove.*

*Mirv.* The Sp'rits that see into the latent Seeds  
 Of Time, and know th' unripe Event of things,  
 Have giv'n me firm Assurance of Success.

## 28 The Persian Princess: Or,

These were their Words,——

“ Fortune is ever lavish to the Brave,  
 “ Strike home, and be assur’d Success to have;  
 “ Nor fear Repulse, ’till Slaves their Fetters break;  
 “ And their Demands in Arms and Terror speak.”

——Impossible! But to prevent that Fear,  
 The Slaves shall die;——My Rival too shall die!  
 (For he’s already safe, by my Command;)

Yes, *Artaban*, I will be yet reveng’d;  
 Nor shalt thou long expect what Fate attends thee.

*Re-enter Oxartes to him.*

*Oxart.* At length I’ve track’d him out; Now, all kind  
 Pow’rs

Help me, to work him to my honest Purpose.

*Mirv.* Th’ High-Priest ere this has giv’n the potent  
 Draught,

And his offended Gods are now appeas’d;  
 If a King’s Death atone for common Victims.——

’Tis time I leave these Groves; the King once dead,  
 Then, *Mirvan*, is thy Hour to grasp at Empire! [Going.]

*Oxart.* What Words of horrid Meaning does he mutter?  
 Lord *Mirvan*,——

*Mirv.* ——Ha! what hollow Voice was that?  
 Or did my Fancy, penetrating Sense,  
 Create this Noise to start me from my Cates?  
 But something does approach:—What art thou, speak?—

*Oxart.* I am as thou art; an *Armenian* born,  
 By Custom grown a *Persian*; forc’d by Wrongs,  
 (Whose bare Remembrance fires my thinking Soul;)—  
 To quit my Native Soil: An Enemy

Profess’d



*The Royal Villain.* 29

Profess'd to *Artaban*; and his Adherents;

*Mirv.* Talk'st thou of Wrongs, which *Mirvan* can redress?

What would'st thou have with me, and wherefore sought me

At this dead Hour, this late unhallow'd Season?

*Oxart.* Night answers well the Purpose of my Heart;  
I would, Revenge; Revenge on *Artaban*:

Deep in my Breast, I wear the Characters

Of Injuries receiv'd; not worn and film'd

By length of Time, but fresh as bleeding Sores;

You too have known the smart of an Abuse;

Despis'd, and elbow'd out of Dignity

By him, by *Artaban*; yet can forgive

The small Disgrace, and think your self unhurt!

*Mirv.* Plagues, Pestilences blast me, if I do;

My Hate to him, were both our Bodies burnt

On the same Pile, the *Theban* Story would

Renew; and separating Flames ascend

In distant Columns.— But a sure Revenge

Salutes us, with the Dawn of early Day;

Already has the Sentence reach'd his Ear,

Or quickly will;

*Oxart.* — Ha! must he die so soon? [*Aside.*

*Mirv.* You start, and stand aghast; as if the News

Had froze your Passion with a cold Repentance;

And struck you speechless.

*Oxart.* — I shall lose my self,

And all the means to save him! — [*Aside.*] No, you

wrong me;

30 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

But I am griev'd to think, there is a Train  
Will ruin yours, the King's, and my Revenge.  
And therefore sought I you.

*Mirv.* — Unfold this Wonder;  
What mean you? —

*Oxart.* — Not to cheat you with a Lye;  
Or pawn my Truth to buy your easie Faith:  
(You juster Pow'rs, forgive me, that I'm false!)  
Here is a Dagger; take it, if you doubt me;  
And whensoever you think my Story stain'd  
With Falshood's Die; plunge it into my Throat,  
And so prevent the growth of a Deceit.

*Mirv.* No more of that; Distrust is incident  
To Cowards and ignoble Minds alone:  
Speak on, and I believe —

*Oxart.* — Then mark me well.

*Oxartes*, having escap'd the Fate of Battel,  
(A Youth, whom *Artaban* hath ever lov'd,  
And next to Heav'n, above Mankind prefer'd;)  
Hath brought six hundred Men; who round the City,  
Mix'd in the Tumult of the gen'ral Triumph,  
Walk unobserv'd: These, in Detested League,  
Have bound themselves, yet ere the rising Day,  
To fire the Prison; or with Sword in Hand, —  
When their lov'd *Artaban*'s led out to Death,  
To force the Guard, and bear him off in Triumph.

*Mirv.* Damnation! how the subtle Poison steals,  
And wars within my Veins, and stings my Heart!  
O! for some Politician's abler Brain  
To change this Scene of Death, and turn the Scale

Of Mischief on the curst Contriver's Head!——

*Oxart.* I thank you Gods, it takes as I could wish:

[*Aside*]

To win your Friendship, and secure my Vengeance,  
My self will run this bold, and desp'rate Hazard;  
Blast their Designs, or perish in th' Attempt.

*Mirv.* What Prospect of Success dawns on thy Hopes?  
Can'st thou, with single Arm, pretend t' o'eturn  
And marr the Purpose of concerting Numbers?  
Let not thy thirst of Vengeance fool thy Reason.——

*Oxart.* Attend, my Lord, to my Advice; you say  
The Prince's Doom is fix'd, and Sentence giv'n:  
Then give it out, That Death all Quarrels ends;  
And as you wish his Soul should part in Peace,  
Appoint some rev'rend Father to dicourse him,  
To preach Forgiveness of your mutual Wrongs,  
And an Exchange of Pardon, ere he dies:  
Be that my Province:——who, as I shall sooth  
His gen'rous Mind, and press th' engaging Duty,  
Will watch a time to drench my Poniard deep,  
And suck his vital Blood!——That when *Oxartes*  
Comes to enlarge his Body from the Prison,  
He may, in horrid Disappointment, find  
The Prince has from his Body freed his Soul:  
So will the Dagger, left, with ease, persuade 'em.——

*Mirv.* Thou Master-piece of exquisite Revenge,  
Grow to my Heart!——But Time o'er-takes our Talk;  
And will not brook Delays; this Signet take;  
An undisputed Warrant for Admittance:  
And when you have atchiev'd the great Exploit,



## 32 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

Expect me in the *Castle-yard*. Farewel;  
And Fate succeed you. [Exit Mirv.]

*Oxart.* ——— Rather bid farewell  
To your fond Hopes! ——— Shine all auspicious Stars,  
And shed assisting Influences down;  
And you blest Pow'rs, that govern this our Earth,  
Let me but save the best of your Creation;  
Then if my Friendship, in the Means, have done  
Ought that must stand for Criminal above;  
Accept my Life, the Forfeit of my Falshood! ———

[Exit Oxartes.]



### SCENE changes to a Prison.

*Artaban discover'd, lying in Chains asleep; Amestris stands weeping by him.*

*Amest.* Good Heav'n's! Is this the great Reward of  
Virtue?  
This gloomy Cell, recluse from Day, and Light,  
But what one melancholy Taper yields,  
That, aw'd with Damps, scarce holds its feeble Fires.  
And yet He sleeps! ——— Sleeps, as his Breast were calm,  
And could out-brave Ill Fortune with Content;  
Henceforth despair not, Wretches, of Relief,  
To soften Sorrows, and oppressing Anguish;  
Since Injuries, like his, can find Repose! ———

*Art.*

*The Royal Villain.* 33

*Art. waking.*] What Sounds, more sweet than Musick,  
reach'd my Ear?

What means my Fate? Is it not my *Amestris*?  
My Life! my Soul! O let me clasp thee, Love,  
In these fond Arms, 'till I expire with Transports!——

[*Going to embrace her, stops.*

Pardon, this kind Excess of sudden Joy  
Made me forget I was, the Wretch I am;  
These rugged Chains with lightest Touch wou'd wound,  
And harrow up thy Softness:——O *Amestris*!  
Why are thy Virtues link'd to these Misfortunes?

*Amest.* What says my Lord? Call not my Love in  
Question:

By the kind Gods that gave me to your Arms,  
Might I but here have leave to dwell with thee,  
I would prefer the dark and dismal Mansion  
To Courts, to Pomp, to Gaiety, and Pleasure.

*Art.* O thou art all Perfection, Truth, and Fondness,  
Come to my Bosom, thou celestial Fair,  
And breathe a Heav'n of Comfort to my Soul:  
Their Irons have lost their Weight, whilst thou art here;  
This Dungeon's Gloom but represents the Night,  
The gentle Hours of Love, and chaste Enjoyment.

*Amest.* O talk not of Enjoyment, but the Grave;  
My busie Thoughts, flutt'ring in search of Joy,  
Do flag, o'er-charg'd with damp and dewy Sorrow;  
And find themselves inclos'd with fast Despair.  
Yet ere a while Death will perhaps o'er-take us,  
(For I have sworn, I will not live behind you,)  
And we shall be no more.——

# 34 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*Art.* — Be calm, my Love;  
Nor wound my Soul with such affrighting Kindness:  
For thou shalt live; forget thy hapless Lord;  
Resume Content, and only die to Sorrow.  
So, Sir, how wears the Night?

*Enter Officer.*

*Officer.* — Too fast, my Lord.

*Artab.* Thou bear'st a Message in thy Eyes, my Friend;  
Which thy too cautious Tongue fears to pronounce:  
Speak on, I am prepar'd; —

*Officer.* — Forgive me, Prince,  
Who come th'unwilling Herald of your Doom:  
The rising Day must see a setting Sun! —

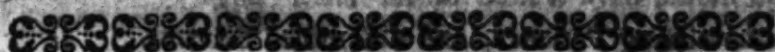
*Art.* Then is One Morn of Comfort still behind;  
As welcome to my Soul, as a kind Spring:  
That treads upon a rig'rous Winter's Heels.  
Weep not, *Amestris*, nor unman my Heart;  
Death's dreadful only in an idle Fear  
That startles Cowards: I have met him oft,  
And chas'd the grisley Phantom in the Field;  
Who now pursues, and with ignoble Force  
Insults me, pinion'd: —

*Amest.* Oh! *Artaban!* my Lord, we must not part.  
The hideous Thought distracts my fright'ned Soul;  
And mighty Sorrow, like a hoist'rous Sea,  
Breaks in upon my poor unguarded Breast:  
Which strives in vain to stem the raging Tide.  
My Spirits shrink, and all the Woman yields.  
O, hold me up; and clasp me to your Bosom;  
There hide me from the dire reflecting Image



*The Royal Villain.* ACT 35

Of all my Thoughts, and Fears of—O! to Morrow—  
*Ant.* Why do'st thou press me with such eager Fondness,  
 And make me wish this Being were prolong'd?  
 But all in vain:—Retire we, charming Mourner;  
 If the black destin'd Hour of Death be come;  
 Nor Pray'rs, nor Sorrow can reverse its Doom:  
 And I have this one Comfort in my Fate,  
 I am not Guilty, but Unfortunate. *[Exeunt]*



SCENE the Castle.

*Enter two Officers.*

*1 Officer.* The King indeed has Fury in his Temper;  
 Yet never have I seen him thus outrageous:  
 But now he snatch'd a Jaw'lin from his Guard,  
 And stabb'd it in the Bosom of his Neighbour;  
 Crying, his Father's Death must be reveng'd.

*2 Officer.* 'Tis strange; The Croud interpret it to  
 Madness:

Others, with subtle Malice, are industrious  
 To spread it round, A Judgment from the Gods;  
 But much I fear, it has a Hellish Cause;  
 The Priest and his sly Draught of Reconcilement,  
 I doubt, contain'd a killing Kindness in it.

*1 Officer.* Heav'n best can tell; and best revenge the  
 Treason.

But see, the Prince has pass'd the Antichamber;  
 With our High-Priest; and bend their Steps this way:

*They.*

### 36 *The Persian Princess's Or,*

They seem engag'd in some Discourse of Moment,  
We must not break upon their private Walks. [Exeunt.

*Enter Mirvan, and High Priest.*

*Mirv.* Fear not th' Event; but grant a short delay  
To the firm Strength, and Vigour of his Youth;  
That pushes to expel its abler Foe,  
And guard a while the Citadel of Life;  
But cannot long maintain th' unequal Combat:  
You should have waited on his latest Pangs  
With wishing Patience, and dissembled Sorrow.

*H. Priest.* I durst not longer trust my feeble Soul  
To see his Racks, Distortions, wringing Pains;  
And hear his Groans, so exquisite and piercing,  
They'd almost force a sympathetick Sorrow  
From things Inanimate: A longer Stay  
Had sure betray'd me to a guilty trembling;  
And wrought a foul Confession from my Tongue,  
When the dire Object of his Pains invades  
My Thoughts, I with the Business were undone.

*Mirv.* By Heav'n, 'tis an Impeachment to your Wisdom,

To let the Wish of one relenting Moment  
Fight with the Motions of your nobler Vengeance:  
But if so dire an Object has impress'd  
A firm, repenting Pity on your Mind;  
Then I have done:—Go, expiate your Offence;  
Confess, some cogent Demon push'd you on;  
Or, that the Furies made you do that Deed,  
At which your tame reflecting Spirits shrink,  
And stung with Horror make your Life a Burthen?

This

This will dissolve the tender-hearted Croud;  
And lull their Rage to soft and melting Sorrow.

*H Priest.* Mistake not, Sir;—But see, the Presence  
opens;

Let us retire; I would not tempt my Courage  
With a fresh View of what so strongly mov'd me.

[*Exeunt.*]

*The SCENE opening, discovers the King held by  
his Attendants.*

*King.* Where are my Friends?—Be quick;—Pour  
Rivers on me,

Quench my scorch'd Entrails; see, I'm all on fire;

A flaming Brand has sing'd my Vitals; ha!

I blaze, I blaze;—*Four* thunder me to Hell,

Or I shall set your airy Poles on fire.

*1 Officer.* See, now he shivers with Extreams of Cold!

*King.* Begone, malicious Hags!—Speak to 'em, *Memo-*  
*non;*

The curst Strumpets here have brought their Sieve,

And dribble th' Icy Waters o'er my Bowels.

Ha! who's that grins?—What *Mirvan*! do'st thou  
laugh

To see me thus abus'd? Come hither, Sister;

Thou shalt not have the Traytor.

*2 Officer.* His Words are wild, and starting as his Eyes;  
He grasps me hard, and trembles as there were



# 38 *The Persian Princess; Or,*

*An Earthquake in his Bosom.*

*King.* — What, my Father!

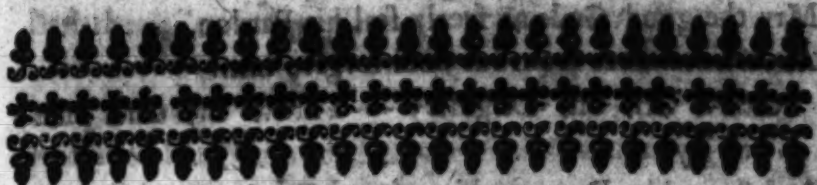
Let me go nearer; he would whisper to me:  
What say'st, old Boy? — The Business shall be done: —  
March out our Legions there; go, drain my Treasure;  
We'll hire us forty thousand *Parthian* Archers,  
No matter, let the Country lie untill'd;  
I will have ev'ry Peasant press'd to th' War:  
Oh! — I am wounded: Lead me to my Tent:  
Nay, pluck not out the Shaft; for if you do  
My Soul will follow — But the gushing Flood  
Runs fast, and I grow weak with loss of Blood.

*[They lead him out.]*

## *The End of the Third Act.*



**ACT**



# ACT IV. SCENE I.

## SCENE the Prison.

*Oxartes, Cleander, and Guards.*

**Oxart.** **C**leander, best dismiss your Fellow-Guards  
To make all sure:—But let the Prince be told  
Lord Mirvan's Will.—

**Clean.** — You know this Signet, Friends;  
With it I've Orders to discharge you hence,  
To join the Centry on the Castle Duty;  
I must attend the Prince's latest Hour.  
Farewell t' you all: But, Captain, let him know  
This Rev'rend Man is from his Brother sent;  
To beg he would in Death all Wrongs forget.

*[Exeunt Guards]*

The Noon of Night is past; and I have Work  
Will take up all my Time; so must not stay  
To be a Witness of your opening Friendship.  
Make not delays:

*[Exit Cleander]*

**Oxart.** — The Gods for ever love you!

*Enter Capt. as discoursing with Artaban, then Exit.*

*Amestris follows weeping.*

**Artab.** I thank him, Sir; — My Bosom is at rest,

And

## 40 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

And ev'ry Thought of Injuries corrected:

May the good Gods as freely seal his Pardon;

As *Artaban* does from his Soul forgive him.

*Oxart.* Off, off, Disguise; --- Throw thy dark Man-  
tle by;

And shoot like Day, on his amazed Eyes.

*Artab.* Propitious Heav'n, what Prodigies are these?

O all you Gods, It must be sure *Oxartes*,

In Kindness come to see his dying Friend:

Give me my All, and close my wounded Breast;

That, aking, yawn'd to be supplied by thee.

And found a Loss of half its vital Pow'rs.

*Oxart.* To be your humblest, ever faithful Slave,

[*Kneeling.*]

Is all the Fame *Oxartes* would desire

To bless his Life, and crown his Death with Honour.

*Artab.* Rise, my best Friend; Death only must divide us:

A thousand Questions croud for Utterance,

All choak the Passage, and would all be first.

What Deity preserv'd you in the War?

I saw you fall oppress'd, and thought you dead,

Where got you this Disguise? And why? and how,

Prevail'd for Entrance?—Say, and give me Ease.

*Oxart.* Time is too precious, and advanc'd too far

To waste it in Enquiries. Royal Sir,

O spare this Prodigality of Kindness;

Least I be lost in your Excess of Love,

And so forget, I come to set you free.

*Artab.* Ye Pow'rs, what new Vicissitude of Fate

Has your Eternal Justice yet in store?

*Amest,*



*The Royal Villain.* 41

*Amest.* Instruct me, Heav'n! how shall my grateful Soul  
Best thank, or best applaud the brave *Oxartes*?

*Oxart.* 'Tis not my Praise, but Joy, most Honour'd  
Mistress;

For Man but treads his Fate-directed Rounds,  
And all he does is from above deriv'd.

Think, there are Guardian Pow'rs that always wake

To save the Good; for Virtue props their Heav'n:

And I'm the happy executing Choice,

To Minister to their unseen Decrees;

Which, as their Substitute, I thus begin:

Accept this Sword, and if we are oppos'd,

Then let us fight for Conquest and for Freedom.

*Artab.* Gods! How Amazement swallows up my Senses?

And in th' Impetuous Whirl of circling Fate

Drinks down my Reason!----

*Oxart.* —Haste, my gracious Lord;

The Master Jaylor, good *Cleander's* ours;

Assists our Flight in Person, and directs

A secret Path: Not far from hence, there stands

Prepar'd a Chariot for my Royal Mistress;

And on the Hills, impatient of your Presence,

Six hundred valiant Men, *Armenians* all,

The willing Partners of your Captive Fortune,

Who fought indeed, but could not conquer for you,

(For Destiny o'erpower'd their Mortal Force;)

Wait, eager to conduct you to a Throne.

*Artab.* O my *Amestris*, shall I once again

Bear thee to Joys, to Royalty, and Love?

But we delay; — My brave Deliv'rer lead,

We

42 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

We will with distant Admiration tread;  
And in your Mien divine Refulgence read,  
So when *Aeneas* fought the golden Bough,  
With Contemplation sick, his Gate was slow;  
When strait his Mother's sacred Doves appear'd,  
And o'er his Head their airy Voyage steer'd:  
Then with Security and Joy he tread,  
And trac'd the Footsteps of the Leading God. [Exeunt;

SCENE changes to the Castle-Yard.

Enter Memnon and Servant.

*Memn.* Get me my Horse; — The Morning rises slow;  
And all those ruddy Streaks, that us'd to paint  
The Day's Approach, are lost in Clouds; as if  
The Horrors of the Night had sent 'em back  
To warn the Sun, he should not leave the Sea:  
Or peep on Objects would prophane his Brightness.  
I must be gone; my Danger chides me hence:  
Where Kings are murder'd, who can hope for Safety?  
Poor Prince! thy Mem'ry and thy Subjects Love  
Are with Thee dead; and all Applause is *Mirvan's*.

Re-enter Servant.

*Serv.* Your Servants wait your Pleasure; —

*Memn.* — 'Tis enough: [Shouts within;

Hark, how the Clam'rous Rebels rend the Sky;

For

For shame ye Pow'rs, give o'er your Providence,  
And let this little Globe of Earth become  
A Play-thing, to be toss'd about by Fortune.  
Chance may connive at Villains, Murther'd Kings,  
And Usurpation, yet be well excus'd;  
Because it wants the Thunder to revenge:  
But Heav'n, that has the Power to redress,  
In an extrem of Mercy blasts its Justice.  
Farewel, ungrateful City! I no more  
Will enter these your Walls, till I'm assur'd  
A better Choice adorns the Throne of Persia.

[*Ex. Memnon.*]

*A Flourish of Trumpets, after which Enter Mirvan,  
as King, attended: People Shouting.*

*Mirv.* Enough, my Friends, of this tumultuous Joy;  
It jars against the Ear, and gives Offence.  
The Nation's Ferment, and the publick Cause  
Of fresh Afflictions, might have well excus'd  
This loud Officious Love. — No more, I pray;  
But leave me, Sirs. Time and my Reign will best  
Determine how I may deserve your Thanks.

*Risafiris.*

[*Exeunt People.*]

*Offic.* — Sir;

*Mirv.* — I must employ you: — Cold  
Deliberate Heads hatch Dangers in their Hearts.  
Old *Memnon*, and th' Inquiring Faction's Peers  
Seem not to relish Me, as I would have 'em;  
But chew upon their Monarch's sudden Death,  
As if it smelt of something more than Fate.  
I've sent a Summons to 'em, and thereby

*Will*



44 *The Persian Princess. Or,*

Will sound their Inclinations. Draw up all  
Your Men, and plant 'em round the Castle Walls;  
Let others be dispers'd to guard the City,  
And crush each rising Tumult.---

*Offic.* --- We obey.

[*Exeunt Officers.*]

*Manet Mirvan.*

*Mirv.* This dreading Priest does Murther sure in State;  
With lazy Pomp, and deep-designing Slowness,  
T' enhance the Merit of the Fact with Doubts  
And anxious Expectation.---Or perhaps  
Some envious Chance has balk'd his fair Intent;  
And interpos'd betwixt our hop'd Revenge.  
Or, if the Villain should have plaid me false;  
O Jealousie, thou Demon of the Brain,  
Haunt not my Breast with thy mis-shapen Anguish!  
He hopes for Favour and Reward from Me;  
And what Enticements, to betray that Trust,  
Can issue from a Slave's dejected State?  
Whom the next Hour disrobes of Gorgeous Life;  
And crushes th' unperforming Promiser!

*Enter Barzanes hastily.*

*Barz.* My Royal Lord---

*Mirv.* ---O welcome, good *Barzanes*;  
How fares our Int'rest? Speak;---

*Barz.* ---The Priest o'th' Sun  
Stands in the Circ, hemm'd in by gath'ring Crouds;  
Who, as he bawls his Rhet'rick in your Service,  
Catch at the dying Accents of his Voice;  
And Echo back the Sound with just Applause,

*Mirv.*

# *The Royal Villain.*

45

*Mirv.* But what said *Memnon* to our hasty Summons?

*Barz.* I came, and found his Doors besieg'd with Herds  
Of Mules and Servants; laden, and prepar'd,  
As 'twere for Journey to remoter Parts.  
And as I press'd amidst the busie Throng,  
He with a num'rous Equipage came forth;  
He started, when he saw me; seem'd surpriz'd,  
And faulter'd at my Message; bad me say,  
That Age and Sorrow had oppress'd his Judgment;  
And render'd him unfit for nicer Counsels:  
This said, he mounted, and away they rode.

*Mirv.* Let the old Dotard go; — But on, and say  
What did Import your Haste.

*Barz.* — By Heav'n, it is  
A Story of that fatal Consequence,  
I fear to give it Words: Let me be dumb,  
And drown the Sorrows of my Tale in Silence!

*Mirv.* What After-game of Mischief is on foot,  
To blast the Pleasures of my Infant Reign?  
While jealous Fancy's busie with my Thoughts,  
To swell this unknown Ill to Giant Greatness:  
Speak, in the Name of Horror, all thy Tydings;  
Tho' they have force to freeze my youthful Blood,  
And turn me to a Statue with Confusion!

*Barz.* That hellish Priest, whom you but now employ'd,  
Work'd into Trust soon slipt his Serpent's Skir;  
And under his Exterior Sanctity  
Was false *Oxartes* hid.

*Mirv.* — *Oxartes!* Ha! —  
Furies, and Hell reward the subtle Fiend.

*Barz.*

## 46 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*Barz.* Oh, this is nothing to the Blow that follows;  
You are betray'd too by *Cleander*; He,  
Brib'd by *Oxartes*, hath releas'd the Slaves.  
The Dungeons all are destitute and empty,  
And they this Night with *Artaban* are fled.

*Mirv.* The Slaves releas'd! My Rival too escap'd!  
A clammy Sweat comes o'er me:—O my Tortures!—  
Millions of Plagues o'er-take 'em in their Flight.  
Assist, ye wrathful Pow'rs; let posting Deaths  
Ride on the sickly Air, and make it breathe  
Cramps, Pains, Sores, Poisons, ev'ry Name that bears  
Antipathy to Life, or Health, or Ease!—

*Barz.* Have Patience, Sir, to stem this Tide of Fate;  
And summon all your Spirits to your Aid.  
I have a Word of Horror yet remains,  
Will pass thro' all the Inlets of your Breast;  
And rush, like molten Lead, upon your Heart.  
The Princess—

*Mirv.* —What of Her?

*Barz.* —Is with Them fled.

*Mirv.* The Princess fled! O *Mirvan*? Fool! What Seas  
Of Blood hast thou been diving thro', to see  
The rich sought Coral snatch'd by other Hands?  
Empire alone's an empty, barren Rock,  
When Ornamental Beauty's torn away.  
Deceitful Fortune! Ever-changing Strumpet,  
Curse on thy Gifts; henceforward I disclaim  
Thy treach'rous Bounty, and will fix my Hopes  
On my own Sphere: Nor is it yet too late:  
Quick, see it done.—

*Barz.*



*The Royal Villain.* 47

*Barz.* What done, my Lord?

*Mirr.* — Unnecessary Slave!

I will have Vengeance shall make Nature shake,  
And tremble at my Fury. — Draw out all  
My Veteran Troops, and strait pursue the Traytors;  
Nor let one Slave, on Pain of Death, escape,  
But hew 'em into Atoms: Only spare  
*Amestris* Life, and guard it as your own;  
She yet may see her Folly, and be kind;  
If not, I'll drag her trembling to my Arms;  
And Pleasures heighten'd in her Anguish prove;  
Then stab Her, glowing with unwilling Love!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

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**SCENE** *changes to a Plain, with a distant  
Prospect of the City.*

*Enter Artaban, Amestris, Memnon, Oxartes richly habited,  
Cleander, Soldiers, and Attendants.*

*Art.* This fair Alliance pleases me so well, —  
It only gives me room to wish, it had  
Sprung from a less detested Cause than Murther;  
For tho' the King of Persia were my Foe,  
And to have kill'd him bravely in the Field  
Had been a Cause for Triumph: Yet to think  
Him basely murther'd, cancels Enmity,  
Turns all the Streams of Hate, and makes 'em flow  
In Pity's Channels.

*Amest.*

## 43 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*Amest.* — Sure such Acts as these,  
Were Hell yet uncreate, would force the Gods  
In Self-defence to quash bold impious Man:  
Or now begin to muse on Realms of Torture!

*Memn.* Impartial *Jove*, that lords it o'er the World,  
Will in his Time revenge a Monarch's Blood.

*Artab.* Oh! my *Amestris*, how the pearly Dew  
That trickles down your Cheeks, falls heavy here!  
But to forbid it for a Brother's Death,  
Would do a wrong to Piety and Custom,  
Tears are the Call of Nature. —

*Oxart.* — Royal Sir,  
Our common Safety points another Hour,  
More suitable, for Ceremonial Sorrow:  
We scarce are distant yet a slow Hour's March,  
And may from hence o'er-look the City's Spires;  
Who dares assure us, but th' Usurper *Mirvan*  
Alarm'd upon our Flight, and taught by Fear,  
To make his guilty Title more secure,  
May send his Forces out in strict Pursuit,  
And take us unprepar'd?

*Memn.* — 'Tis true, my Lord;  
His Guilt may prove pernicious to us all.

*Art.* Therefore let's fence against the Tyrant's Rage:  
Pitch down your Tents awhile; I hold it best,  
That you and I, Lord *Memnon*, with a Party  
Ride round the Country; and proclaim to all  
Our Purpose to revenge the poison'd King:  
This will inance the Justice of our Cause,  
And may augment our Numbers. —

*The Royal Villain.*

49

*Amest.* — O my Lord,

Must I be left so soon? Bear Witness Heav'n,  
What dreadful Apprehensions scare my Soul;  
A chilly Fear runs shudd'ring thro' my Veins;  
And tells my Heart, I ne'er shall see you more.

*Artab.* O think me not unkind, nor cherish Doubts;  
Not half the Space that measures out a Day,  
Will I be banish'd from your matchless Arms,  
Nor would I leave thee on a trivial Cause,  
But this has on the Shape of publick Moment,  
'Tis the Concern of all: — To thee, *Oxartes*,  
I here bequeath all that my Heart holds Dear;  
Thou hast a Soul may cheer her Widow'd Virtue,  
And make the Hours of my unwilling Absence  
Fly on uncounted.

*Amest.* — All the Gods protect you,  
And bring you back in Safety to *Amestris*.

*Artab.* Doubt not, my Princess; nay, forbear these Tears;  
They make the Pangs of my Departure long;  
And clog Farewel for ever on my Tongue.  
But oh! Farewel, my Love; — She's gone, my Lord;  
And we, like lonely Travellers, must stray;  
Robb'd of the friendly Sun's all-cheering Ray,  
Lost in the Gloom, and longing for the Day.

[*Exeunt, Amestris led by Oxart. at one Door, Artaban  
and Memn. at another.*]

*The End of the Fourth Act.*

D

ACT



50 *The Persian Princess; Or,*

ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE *continues, the Plain, &c.*

*Enter Oxartes with his Sword drawn, follow'd by Memnon;*

*Oxart.* O! Had I bravely dy'd in her Defence,  
I'd paid a Debt to Duty and to Glory;

But to survive, and have Her born away,

In Spite of all I could, or dar'd to do;

It stabs my Virtue with a Breach of Trust:

Villain and Coward! — Gods! It is too much;

And nought remains to justify my Fame,

But thus to turn my Sword against my self.

*Memn.* Forbear, rash Man; submit you to the Gods;  
What Heav'n decrees,

With vain Effort, we struggle to subvert.

Acquitted to the World, you're self-condemn'd;

Because your Valour met not that Success

It well deserv'd: — How does the Prince resent

This Blow of Fortune? —

*Oxart.* — Oh he raves, my Lord;

His Pass'on makes him rage, as wildly fierce,

As the scorch'd Tempest beaten Sands of *Africk*

Sometimes in an Extream of silent Sorrow,

He

He mourning droops, regardless of his Friends:  
Talk of his Empire, and he sighs, and cries,  
No, let the Man that dares possess it, have it;  
For I have done with Glory.——

*Memn.* —— Let's to his Tent,  
And rouse him up to Fame; work his fond Soul  
T'attempt her Rescue, or to fall with Honour. [*Exeunt.*]

**SCENE** changes to Artaban's Tent, discovers  
him lying on the Ground.

*Art.* Let None presume on Birth, or Fortune's Smiles,  
Nor fix his Happiness in being Great:

*Re enter Oxartes and Memnon.*

Learn all from Me, that Grandeur has its Plagues;  
And Death's the first, best Refuge from Afflictions.  
The Fate of Man's a Labyrinth of Chances,  
Thro' which he drags his weary wand'ring Feet,  
And thinks at ev'ry Turn he's disingag'd:  
Still in the winding Crookedness involv'd,  
And still perplex'd with Folds of endless Error! ——  
Ha! what art Thou? —— [*Oxartes comes forward.*]  
Haste in thy Steps, and Fury in thy Eyes!  
Avant! —— I will not hear of Battel more. ——

*Memn.* Exert your Soul, my Lord; Shake off this Sad-  
ness:

Forbid it Heav'n, that we should let your Honour  
Thus wither in its Bloom: —— Now, by the Sun,  
I wept to see your Soldiers hang their Heads,

52 *The Persian Princess; Or,*

As if their Prince's Sorrow were contagious.

*Art.* O *Memnon*, *Memnon*! think not I have lain  
On Beds of Roses here: Not all the Plagues,  
The Tortures, Man can suffer in his Body,  
Afflict with half the Pains that I have bore.

O! what is our Ambition's Spring but Love!  
Or, what the Source and Cherisher of Honour,  
But Love! — For This, the Soldier prizes Danger;  
And smiles with Pleasure on his Toils and Wounds:  
To throw his Lawrels in his Mistress' Lap,  
And entertain her with his grateful Labours!  
O, my *Amestris*! —

*Oxart.* Heave again, my Lord;  
And let the rising Tempest of your Sighs  
Rush strongly, and unhinge this galling Anguish.  
Think of the poor *Amestris*; what must She  
Endure? O let me be for ever dumb,  
Rather than vent the Image of my Doubts,  
Too horrid for Expression. —

*Art.* — Thou hast rais'd  
A Whirlwind in my Breast: — Conflicting Rage  
Distends each Sinew; and remains my Soul.  
Speak to my Fury, speak it all, *Oxartes*;  
And give not dire Imagination room,  
For ought beyond it hideous.

*Oxart.* What will the Tyrant *Mirvan* leave undone,  
To cure the raging Fever in his Mind?  
Suppose Him burning with his Lawless Love;  
The Princess, urging all the Ties of Honour  
And Duties of a Wife — Then think his Hate,

And



And frustrated Revenge in your Escape:-  
What more can please his disappointed Envy,  
Than to compleat it on her Innocence?

*Artab.* O, for Protection from that frightful Thought!  
Shall She be made the Spoil of brutal Lust,  
And I not stir an Arm in her Defence?  
O let it not be said, *Oxartes*, *Memnon*,  
It is *Amestris*' Cause; and Heav'n it self  
Must succour us against th' Invading Tyrant.  
Justice no longer will his Insults bear,  
But brandishes her executing Spear;  
She draws our Swords, and wings us to the Fight,  
Her Wrongs t'avenge, and vindicate her Right. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to the Castle.

*Enter Mirvan.*

*Mirv.* Once more is Fate come back; the stubborn Dame  
Is in my Hands; and shall submit, or Dye.  
I will have Love, to recompence my Pangs;  
Nor shall the cold Excuse of Wife, or Virtue,  
Have Pow'r to dull, or disappoint my Ardour;  
No, coy *Amestris*; I have fawn'd too long;  
'Tis time I now command; and use my Pow'r.

*Enter Barzanes hastily.*

What ominous Fear speaks thro' your haggard Eyes?

D 3

*Barz.*

54 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

*Barz.* Our Watchmen from the Battlements, my Lord,  
Tall Clouds of Dust descry, that choak the Sight;  
And drive apace their tow'ring Circles hither.  
And ever and anon, amidst the Smoak,  
A Gleam of Brightness flashes on their Eyes.  
Neighing of Steeds is heard, and a hoarse Din  
Of clashing Armour; but the Sound encreases,  
And ev'ry Moment brays with louder Terror.

*Mirv.* With speed go learn their further Observations;  
But charge 'em on their Lives, they do not noise  
This Fright amongst the madding Populace. [*Ex. Barzanes.*  
These *Persians* are as Mutinous as Air;  
That forms its Tumults from each factious Vapour  
Of co'd or hot Complection. —

If *Artaban's* hot Courage should attempt  
The Princess' Rescue, so superior to him  
Our Numbers are, of so much firmer Strength;  
'Tis but for him to perish in th' Assault:  
And render my Revenge yet more Compleat.

[*Re-enter Barzanes with his Sword drawn.*

*Barz.* All's on the Rout, my Lord; Prince *Artaban*,  
With *Memnon*, is at Hand; Auxiliar Troops  
Croud up his Rear, and toyl our best Defence.  
The faithless *Persians*, throwing down their Arms,  
Traffick for Life; and sell their Sworn Allegiance  
For shameful Quarter: —

*Mirv.* Villain, get thee down [*Stabs him.*  
To Hell; and tell 'em that the Fray's begun;  
And we will send such Shoals of murther'd Slaves,  
Shall glut their empty Regions.

*Barz.*

*The Royal Villain.* 55

*Barz.* — O! I dye;  
Ungrateful! but I see Fate lye before me,  
And view thee grappling in the Snare. — [Dies]

*Mirr.* — Thou ly'st,  
False Prophet! but the Storm comes on apace,  
And will prevent my Purpose. [Goes in]

*Enter Oxartes with a Party driving in the High-Priest  
Wounded.*

*H. Priest.* Spare my Life;  
And do not violate this hallow'd Robe.

*Oxart.* By all the Sanctity belongs to Priesthood,  
No Privilege of Garb shall skreen a Villain!  
Tho' all thy Mystick Trumpery, thy Heaps  
Of Household Gods were wrap'd within thy Gown;  
Nought should protect Thee from this Stroke of Justice.

*H. Priest.* Revenge me, Gods! — [Dies]

*Oxart.* — Go make a fair Appeal  
To *Æacus*, to *Minos*, *Rhadamanthus*;  
And let those Potentates of nether Justice  
See thee Reveng'd: — But be thy Crimes unknown;  
Least Hell it self should fear more foul Disorder  
From thee, the Breathing Trumpet of Sedition!

*Sold.* What Body's this lies weltring in its Blood?

*Oxart.* By Heav'n it is *Barzanes*, *Mirvan's* Creature;  
May all such Villains meet the Fate they merit:  
But see; the Guards are muster'd to oppose us.

[*Oxartes and his Party fight off.*]



56 *The Persian Princess: Or,*



SCENE *changes to a private Apartment.*

*Enter Amestris bloody, follow'd by Mirvan with a Dagger.*

*Mirv.* Why should you look on Pleasure with that Dread,  
As to make Death a Refuge to avoid it?  
The Purple Flood runs trickling down your Robe,  
And had not I the greedy Weapon seiz'd,  
It soon had found a Passage to your Heart.

*Amest.* Then Heav'n had been most merciful and just;  
And I with Joy had blest its Providence:  
And shrunk into the leaden Arms of Death,  
Secure from thee, and such detested Villains.

*Mirv.* Think if I am a Villain; Traitors, think  
'Twas baleful Influence of successful Love  
That blasted first my Virtue. Then reflect,  
And curse thoseauteous, but malignant, Eyes:  
Whose guilty Fires inflam'd my glowing Breast,  
And then deny'd to cure the Wounds they made.

[*An Alarm within.*

But hark! they come, Enchantress. —

*Amest.* — O, what mean you?

*Mirv.* To quaff the luscious sparkling Nectar off,  
And leave the Dregs for Him. — Come, spare my Labour;  
Comply a little, and I will allow  
Some Struggles to your wishing Modesty;  
I know that Women will not wholly yield;  
But must be gently forc'd to what they wish:  
Nay, be not Obstinate. —

*Amest.*

*Amest.* — Oh! kill me rather;  
But spare my Virtue; hear me, Chaste Diana:  
Hear, Virgin Deity; support my Weakness,  
And save me from Dishonour. —

*Oxart.* [*Within.*] Submit, and yield the Passage, or you  
Dye.

*Guards.* Our Faith is more than Life.

*Amest.* — O help, ye Gods!

*Mirv.* He shall not yet possess thee.

[*Oxart. breaks in as Mirv. goes to kill her; Mirv. is join'd  
by Guards; they Fight; Oxart. bears off Amest.*

*Oxart.* Traitor, hold  
Thy cursed Hand.

*Mirv.* Have at thee, perjur'd Fiend.

[*Fight off.*

*Re-enter Mirvan wounded.*

Perdition catch 'em! Am I left alone?

As if they watch'd this Turn of froward Fortune,  
And waited but to sail before the Wind.

*Enter Cleander.*

*Cleander.* Ha! art thou found?

*Mirv.* — Whom dost thou threaten, Hellhound?  
Think'st thou that *Mirvan* is a Match for thee?

*Cleander.* Th' Injustice of thy Cause has levell'd *Mirvan*  
Beneath our meanest Champions.

*Mirv.* — Thou hast found  
That *Mirvan* yet can conquer to thy Cost.

[*Fight and Cleander falls.*

*As Mirvan is going, Enter Artaban.*

*Art.* Come back, Usurper; here, and meet thy Fate;  
This Sword must end Thee; tho' it is my Curse

58 *The Persian Princess: Or,*

To stain it with that gully Blood of thine:  
But Justice, and that Heav'n which thou hast wrong'd  
With Usurpation, Rapes, and savage Murthers,  
Exact it, to atone their injur'd Pow'rs.

*Mirv.* Fond and insulting! Flatter not thy self  
With fancy'd Triumphs over me, who am  
Born to controul and awe thy weaker Fate.  
Behold the utmost Limits of thy Life;  
But I could curse those unperforming Gods,  
That made me fierce, and willing to destroy,  
Yet gave me not the Pow'r of Basilisks,  
To murder with a Look.—I would disdain  
To lift my Arm, and blast Thee with my Eyes.

*Art.* The Gods that know the Malice of a Fiend,  
Hold in his Pow'r, subservient to their Will;  
Else, absolute in his malignant Frenzy,  
The Demon would depopulate the World:  
Such is thy Rage, and so art thou restrain'd.  
But, Tyrant, purple Villain! where's my Wife?

*Mirv.* I would be silent, but that I have Words  
Fell as the Hate I bear Thee: Sounds, as fatal  
As Arrows dipt in the Nonacrian Lake,  
To pierce and poison thy inamour'd Soul.  
Thy Wife is dead.

*Art.* —It cannot, must not be!  
If there be Gods, it is impossible!  
And thou the blackest, execrable Fiend,  
Hast made this Fiction to torment my Soul.

*Mirv.* Let it be so: But had you heard her Cries,  
Her piercing Shrieks, in Intervals of Joy,

When



*The Royal Villain* act I 56

When I with Fury seiz'd my trembling Prey,  
And grown Immortal in Excess of Pleasure  
Revell'd amidst her Charms— Indeed she wept,  
And sobb'd, and sigh'd, so hideous and profound,  
With so much Bitterness of rueful Sorrow;  
That I in Pity drew my Poniard out,  
And ended all her Troubles.

*Art.* — Do I Dream?  
Or am I waken'd from the frightful Slumber  
And finding it is true, congeal with Horror?  
But I will tear this stupid Madness out;  
Gods! did you hear with how much Insolence—  
He loudly dares your Justice, yet are calm?  
But I delay too long—

*Mirv.* — Yet be advis'd,  
And urge not thus your Fortune; I'm appeas'd,  
And would not kill thee. What thy Fate would be,  
Expect in Him.

*Art.* — The poor Cleander slain?  
O common Ravager! each Moment's pause  
Produces fresh Examples of thy Guilt;  
And hastens my Revenge. *[Fight, Mirv. falls.]*

*Mirv.* Hell! I am slain.  
O spare that Stab of Malice; 'tis enough;  
I feel the grisly Monster drag me hard;  
And now I'm hurry'd to his gloomy Den. *[Dies.]*

*Art.* He Dies,—and I, the Victor, strait must follow.  
Perhaps, the poor *Amestris* thinks me slow;  
She, wafted into Bliss, with Pain beholds  
Me fluv'ring on the Shore; and waits my coming.

Thou

60 *The Persian Princess. Or,*

Thou well acquainted Steel, be faithful to me,  
And do the last, best Office for thy Master!

*[Going to fall on his Sword, Oxartes breaks in and prevents him; Amestris, Memnon and Soldiers.]*

*Oxart.* All-gracious Heav'n forbid this dire Event.

*Art.* Whoe'er thou art, thou hast prevented Death:

*Oxartes!* and *Amestris!* Sure I have

Already past the Stream, or all is Riddles.

She only can resolve tem *[Embracing her]*

*Amest.* — Oh my Joy

Swells high above Expression!

*Art.* — Dost thou live?

Then thou art pure, unstain'd, and still *Amestris!*

And all the Villain spoke, was fictitious Horror!

Old *Memnon* too! I am beset with Friends,

Each with a smiling Sympathy of Welcome.

*Memn.* I on my Knees congratulate and see

The Hand of Heav'n in unexpected Changes.

United *Persia's* Eyes are turn'd on you,

The kindly Balm to heal their gaping Wounds,

And set up broken Justice on its Basis.

*Oxart.* Broken indeed, But see the trait'rous Cause,

That shock'd its Fabrick, punish'd in his Crime.

Hence let each bold aspiring Man beware,

Least Heav'n arrest his Passion's fierce Career;

For Vice shall but a short-liv'd Triumph make,

Ere Jove's unerring Wrath its Guils o'er-take;

And the licentious Pomp to Atoms shake.

*[Exit Omnes.]*

# EPILOGUE.

**C**URSE on the Custom, that demands your Stay  
For Epilogue, when tir'd with damn'd dull Play!  
Us, and your selves from this hard Task release;  
And let the grating Imposition cease.  
Lord! on what Thorns you sit, and seem so nettled,  
Because kind Madam yields, and Bargain's settled.  
For Heav'n's Sake, been't thus eager for the Lure,  
You may too soon repent the hot Amour.  
Better be teiz'd with ten dull Poetasters,  
Than single Recipe — for Love's Disasters!  
One hearty Curse, and Epilogue's forgot:  
But when that other Malady's your Lot,  
You will not only Curse, but — curse, and rot.  
Well, take your Fates; when'er such Passions warm ye,  
We Players, like Priests, may chide, but ne'er reform ye.  
Bewitching Sin has Charms, I know, must last,  
'Till Age, in spite of Frailty, make you Chaste:  
Unless Repentance of some dear-bought Pleasure  
Effect at once, what Age would do at Leisure.

FINIS.



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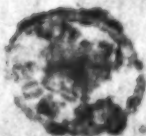
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